

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan represents the culmination of the efforts of approximately 150 members of the Community Partners Group. Working primarily in four committees, they developed visions, goals and programs for the following issue areas that are critical to the future of the Zone.

1. Economic and Workforce Development
2. Housing and Neighborhood Environment
3. Individual and Family Well-Being
4. Civic Infrastructure

The plan is organized around these topics, with one section of programs for each committee area. The focused programs described in this section are intended to address the concerns of Zone residents and conditions in the Zone as part of a regional economic opportunity strategy. Importantly, the plan, although comprehensive, is not a “laundry list” of project ideas. It is a detailed and integrated plan for action.

The Community Partners articulated several successful strategies for change, and the Cincinnati EZ Implementation Plan embodies these strategies:

- Empowerment and skill-building;
- Financial and human capital and asset development;
- Holistic and integrated service delivery systems and multiple paths to access services; and
- Early intervention and prevention.

The philosophy of the Community Partners, as reflected in the package of programs they developed, is to build on what exists as much as possible. Building on the successful systems, organizations and programs already in place gives the Cincinnati Empowerment Zone a “head start”—most of the programs can be fully operational within six months.

Rather than “reinvent the wheel,” the goal of the group was to forge new relationships and linkages. These include linkages among programs with similar missions and target populations; linkages between the public, private and non-profit sectors; linkages between the Zone and the region; and linkages between employers and workers. But perhaps most important are the linkages that have been formed among those who worked so hard to develop the Cincinnati Empowerment Zone Implementation Plan.

The Implementation Plan is organized around the Community Partners committee issue areas. Each section includes the following information:

- Committee vision
- Community concerns and needs identified by residents
- Baseline—existing conditions that the programs address
- Foundations for change—successful programs/organizations
- Directions for change—goals
- Programs
 - Narrative description
 - Implementing partner
 - Timeline
 - Outputs and outcomes
 - Two-year program budget
 - Partners

Also included in the Implementation Plan is the community's Tax Utilization Plan.

Vision: Economic & Workforce Development

We envision a community that can secure its economic future by building personal and community wealth. We believe that the key to economic opportunity is the development of personal and community assets that provide a strong economic base for growth in the community and across the Greater Cincinnati region. To that end, we seek to develop and strengthen our economic foundation and to connect our community to the greater regional and global economy.

Community Concerns

Business and economic development, along with job training, were identified by community residents as their top priority needs. These issues were discussed as part of the community's assets and needs analysis (SWOT analysis). Residents registered significant concerns about the decline in job opportunities that paid livable wages and the absence of resident-owned businesses. They also noted that new economic growth appears to take place primarily outside the city. Simply put, residents no longer feel that they have control of their economic destiny.

Residents identified a number of economic and workforce development needs. These include:

- Increased business ownership among residents
- Expanded market opportunities for existing businesses
- New sources of capital, particularly for micro-enterprises
- Development of underutilized land and building
- Cleanup and reuse of contaminated lands
- Revitalization of neighborhood business districts
- Expanded availability of business incubators
- Enhanced access to "quality" jobs
- Skills training in emerging technologies
- Targeted employment assistance to those with special needs

Baseline: Existing Conditions

These concerns, as expressed by residents, are reflected in economic data and trends in the Zone. Although presented in more detail elsewhere, the conditions in the Zone represent an economy that is far different than that found in the Greater Cincinnati region.

- ***Zone residents have high levels of unemployment***—The unemployment rate in the Zone is 15%, in contrast to a regional economy with an unemployment rate of less than 3.7%. In addition, the Zone labor force participation rate only 52%
- ***Zone unemployment has increased***—Although unemployment in Greater Cincinnati is at historical lows, 30-year trends show increasing unemployment within the Zone. For example, in Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, unemployment rates have increased from 11.4% in 1970 to over 25% in 1990.
- ***The City has experienced job loss***—From 1980-1993 twelve major Cincinnati employers eliminated more than 12,500 jobs, while others have relocated to suburban locations. The manufacturing sector lost over 11,000 jobs between 1980 and 1990.
- ***Poverty in the Zone and in Cincinnati is significant***—Nearly half (47%) of all Zone residents live in poverty. This is reflective of the declining conditions in the City, which saw poverty increase from 19.7% in 1980 to 24.3% in 1990. Cincinnati now has the 12th highest poverty rate of any large U.S. city.

- ***Dependence on public assistance persists***—Although Hamilton County is recognized nationally for its reduction in welfare caseloads, only a small percentage of welfare cases have been closed within the Zone, and 28% of the households receive public assistance.
- ***Many Zone residents are unprepared for work***—Approximately 44% of Zone residents over the age of 25 have no high school diploma. It is predicted, however, that only 11% of future jobs in Greater Cincinnati will require less than a high school diploma
- ***Many Zone residents have limited access to regional employment growth locations*** 50% of Zone households do not have an automobile, and 28% depend on public transportation to get to work.

Foundations for Change

Looking toward the future, Zone residents believe that there are a number of positive attributes in the Zone and surrounding area that will help move residents and businesses toward economic prosperity. The following represent a sample of these community assets:

- ***Three of the region's top ten employers are located in the Zone***—The University of Cincinnati, the Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati (an alliance of several hospitals), and Children's Hospital Medical Center are headquartered in the Zone and have among them almost 31,000 jobs. They also spend hundreds of millions in procuring local supplies and contracts.
- ***Significant capacity for community economic development exists within the Zone***—Zone neighborhoods are served by some of the most capable neighborhood based development corporations in the country such as the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation and the Avondale Redevelopment Corporation. In addition, the Zone hosts the Cincinnati Business Incubator, the Bio-Start Incubator, and Findlay Market, one of the oldest and largest public markets in the country.
- ***Strong manufacturing assets***—Hamilton County has over 90,000 manufacturing jobs, which ranks it 17th among all U.S. counties. It also has one of the country's most respected manufacturing extension programs exists in Cincinnati and is located in one of the proposed Zone development sites. In addition, IAMS operates a 143 acre Manufacturing Technology and Research Park, which can be further developed and is a resource for jobs and supplier opportunities.
- ***A regional approach to economic development***—This year, the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce established a new "Partnership for Greater Cincinnati." The Partnership joins economic development organizations in the three-state region in a collaborative effort to promote and advocate for economic growth and business retention, as well as to alleviate the regional shortage of workers. The effort is designed to replace a fragmented approach to development among various local development organizations with a regional and cooperative approach to economic and workforce development.
- ***Greater Cincinnati CareerResources Center***—The City of Cincinnati's Employment and Training Division (ETD) currently operates the Greater Cincinnati CareerResource Center. The Center provides job seekers with access to multiple employment services such as city, county and state employment and training programs and agencies; career counseling; a computer lab for Internet job search and word processing; job boards; telephone bank and various office machines. Core job search services are available at the Center at no cost to the customer. The Division also staffs the Greater Cincinnati CareerResource Network, which is a collaboration of 45 employment, education and training providers serving the Greater Cincinnati regional labor market.
- ***Significant investment in the Zone***—Major institutions located in the Zone not only intend to maintain their operations there, but

also to make significant investments over the next ten years. Children's Hospital Medical Center will invest \$128 million; the University of Cincinnati, \$122 million; the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, \$35 million; and the Health Alliance, \$40 million. In addition, the Cincinnati Convention and Visitors Bureau has plans for a \$300 million expansion of the convention center, and there are plans for construction of a \$200 million School for Creative and Performing Arts in the Zone.

Directions for Change

The following are the Goals for Economic and Workforce Development developed by the Community Partners Group. These provided the basis for developing program and project initiatives.

1. **Develop and strengthen businesses within the Zone.**
2. **Encourage the productive use of key Zone assets.**
3. **Connect the Zone to the regional/global economy.**
4. **Assist Zone residents to obtain and keep career employment.**

Programs for Change

After weeks of consideration, the Community Partners Planning Group developed the following Nine-Point Program to increase economic opportunity within the Zone.

1. ***Zone Economic Empowerment Center (ZEC)***
Offers targeted financial and business assistance services to Zone businesses. The Center will have an Empowerment Fund that will be capitalized at a minimum of \$20 million, as well as a full cadre of development specialists focused on the management and technical assistance needs of Zone businesses. In addition, the Center will include a U.S. Small Business Administration One Stop Capital Shop and be responsible for microenterprise, business incubator, and neighborhood business district development within the Zone.
2. ***Zone Access Program (ZAP)***
Increases supplier opportunities for Zone businesses. The program will help businesses within the Zone by first encouraging them to buy services among themselves and then helping Zone businesses gain access to supplier opportunities in the greater regional economy. The initiative will also create a certification program that designates Zone businesses as offering quality products and services.
3. ***Wire the Zone Program***
Enhances the telecommunication linkages of Zone businesses and key public institutions such as schools and libraries. The initiative will create interactive linkages by providing the opportunity to connect to a Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) which offers high speed voice, video, and data transmission. Residents will be able to access the system from their homes, businesses, schools, libraries and other public institutions. Federal E-Rate funding will be solicited to support this effort.
4. ***E.Z. Rider Connector Program***
Provides Zone residents with enhanced transportation services in order to facilitate their access to the regional economy. The initiative involves two phases. The first expands and focuses existing transportation efforts to provide more and better services to Zone residents, including reverse commute services and opportunities for car leasing and low interest car loans. The second phase involves the development of a \$1.2 billion light rail system that runs through the Zone and provide residents access to key suburban job growth centers, including the International Airport.
5. ***Partnership for Workforce Competitiveness***
Provides the linkages to help Zone residents obtain jobs with firms outside the Zone. The initiative builds from the commitment of local businesses to make 10,037 positions available to job ready Zone residents. A consortium of

community residents, businesses and local employment and training providers will guide and monitor the effort to insure that both sets of customers—residents and businesses—are being effectively served.

by traditional programs such as African American and Appalachian males. It also will provide a comprehensive set of services that extend from pre-training preparation to post employment support.

6. *Sector-Based Training Initiative*

Provides short-term and career development skills training for key sectors of the regional economy. The effort will combine targeted industry training with pre-employment preparation and post employment support to help Zone residents obtain and keep livable wage jobs. It also will develop career pathways that provide Zone residents and businesses the opportunity to up grade skills and to pursue a career advancement.

7. *Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative*

Targets resources to encourage the remediation and redevelopment of abandoned, idle or underused industrial and commercial properties within the Zone and the proposed developable sites. In addition to its marketing and technical assistance efforts, the program will create a revolving loan program to assist businesses to locate or expand in these areas, thus leading to a more productive use of Zone land and more job opportunities for Zone residents.

8. *Community Bridges*

Builds partnerships between Zone communities and key Zone employers in order to advance their mutual interests. The program will include a marketing component that promotes the assets and benefits of doing business in the Zone, a communication mechanism for Zone residents and key employers, and a dispute resolution forum to mediate problems as they may arise. The effort will also develop materials and an outreach effort to promote the use of E.Z. tax credits.

9. *Preparing and Employing the Hard-to-Serve*

Directs resources to assisting Zone residents with special needs to become job ready. The effort will build from existing program activities by concentrating services among Zone residents, particularly those not served

Program Descriptions**1. Zone Economic Empowerment Center**

This is an integrated, comprehensive initiative to incubate, recruit, retain and expand businesses within the Zone. The **Zone Economic Empowerment Center (ZEC)** will house the Zone's "**One Stop Capital Shop**" (see following background piece on One Stop Capital Shop); the **Economic Empowerment Team (E-TEAM)**; the **Cincinnati Empowerment Fund (E-Fund)**; the **Property Clearinghouse**; and eight **Empowerment Center Partners**. The ZEC will be a private, non-profit corporation governed by a board representing the Cincinnati Empowerment Corporation, Empowerment Center Partners and City of Cincinnati. Physical facilities for the ZEC will be located to create a new anchor for one of the Zone's struggling neighborhood business districts and establish a highly visible focus for critical economic empowerment efforts.

The ZEC will be staffed by the E-TEAM: economic development professionals, support staff and volunteer Community Builders whose job it is to stimulate small business and microenterprise start-ups and retain, recruit and expand Zone manufacturers and businesses. The E-TEAM staff and partnered agencies and organizations will focus on four strategies: Empowering Zone Businesses; Empowering Neighborhood Business Districts; Empowering (Small Business) Incubators; Empowering Microenterprise Development. Every E-TEAM undertaking will utilize existing business assistance resources and programs, as well as prioritize the creation, retention and expansion of enterprises owned by Zone residents, minorities and women.

- The **Empowering Zone Businesses** project will mobilize a comprehensive development resources "road-show" to meet existing business owners in their plants and storefronts and connect them with the technical assistance, tax incentives, financing, public infrastructure improvements and safety enhancements they need to maintain and/or grow their operations. An ongoing assessment

of existing Zone business needs will be conducted to provide early warnings to the E-TEAM on pending business failures or relocations. Prospective businesses interested in starting or relocating their operations in the Zone will be serviced by E-TEAM staff who are well versed in the financing, tax incentives, development sites and other Zone benefits. (The E-TEAM will also utilize Zone promotion and tax credit materials developed in the Community Bridges program.)

- The **Empowering Neighborhood Business Districts** undertaking will conduct research to identify the underserved niche markets within Zone neighborhoods and E-TEAM staff will work to retain and actively recruit both basic (e.g., drugstores, groceries, hardware) and specialty (e.g., pet supplies, ethnic foods, clothing) retailers. E-TEAM staff will also work to expand the impact of the Cincinnati Neighborhood Business Districts United (CNBDU), a citizen advisory group, which has assisted in the investment of \$400,000 to \$700,000 in City funds annually for physical streetscape and facade improvement projects in Zone business districts. Coordinated marketing campaigns, concerted cleanup and safety initiatives will be implemented to augment the E-TEAM's retention and recruitment efforts.
- The **Empowering Incubators** project will:
 - 1) Increase the participation of Zone residents in existing area business incubators (e.g., Cincinnati Business Incubator (CBI), Hamilton County Business Incubator, Bio-Start Incubator);
 - 2) Focus technical assistance and support for the establishment and expansion of new incubators, such as the proposed Findlay Market Kitchen Incubator, a Downtown Retail Incubator, a Wholesale/Warehouse Incubator, an International Business Incubator focusing on trade with Africa, and a Cooperative/Employee-Owned Business Incubator; and
 - 3) Promote the location of incubator graduates within Zone's neighborhood

business districts and manufacturing areas.

- The **Empowering Microenterprise Development** effort will increase access by Zone residents to self-employment opportunities and microloans. This will be done by coordinating and encouraging the efforts of recently initiated microenterprise development programs (e.g., Cooperative Fiscal Service's Build Your Own Business Program) with the advocacy work of the United Way and Community Action Agency in this area. Self-employment opportunities in retailing (e.g., street vending, public market stands), home health services, daycare and specialty food preparation have been identified by Zone residents as attractive alternatives for supplementing or supplanting public assistance.
- The **Cincinnati Empowerment Fund (E-FUND)** will be established to ensure that adequate financing is available for the businesses and organizations participating in each of the strategies outlined above.. The E-FUND will have access to \$21 million annually with most of this amount raised through a matching grant program from Cincinnati's banking community (see attached letters of commitment). The E-FUND's annual funding will be divided into equity and debt financing at the following levels: 1) Equity Financing at \$750,000 and 2) Debt Financing at \$1,250,000.

The City of Cincinnati will also set aside \$500,000 a year from its CDBG entitlement to support E-FUND financing. These resources will be used for acquisition and development of Zone-based or linked **Brownfield Redevelopment Sites** and tax delinquent and/or dilapidated commercial and industrial properties identified by the **Property Clearinghouse** program. These funds will be used to leverage HUD 108 and CDBG Float loans for increased impact.

E-TEAM staff will also rely on Round II Empowerment Zone Tax-Exempt Bond Financing authority and expanded Tax Incentives

to spur economic growth in the Zone. As detailed in the Tax Incentive Utilization Plan, the E-TEAM will maximize these new federal EZ initiatives and leverage existing local and state tax incentives to encourage the retention, expansion, creation, and location of businesses within the Zone.

In addition to the One Stop Capital Shop, E-TEAM and E-FUND, the ZEC will host eight

Empowerment Center Partners:

- An SBA Business Information Center (BIC), with state of the art computer systems and telecommunications to link start-up and expanding businesses with the SBA's on-line technical assistance and program information.
- The Cincinnati Local Development Company (CLDC) with current responsibility for implementing the City of Cincinnati's SBA 504 Loan, assisting in the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund, HUD 108, and CDBG Float Loan programs.
- The Cincinnati Business Incubator (CBI) with its microloan lending and entrepreneurial training programs.
- The Institute for Advance Manufacturing Sciences' (IAMS) manufacturing and environmental engineering technical assistance programs.
- The Greater Cincinnati African American Chamber of Commerce and its new SBA sponsored minority lending program.
- The University of Cincinnati's Small Business Development Center
- The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Cincinnati.
- A Zone-dedicated team from the Cincinnati Chapter of the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) chapter.

These partnerships with key community organizations, institutions and government agencies will create a critical mass of resources at the ZEC and augment the technical assistance and financing it can bring to bear on behalf of the Zone's economic development needs.

EZ SSBG Goals/Options Achieved

This program helps to achieve SSBG statutory goal (1), achieving and maintaining economic self-support, and program option (4) (A), services to promote economic development and job support services.

Implementing Partner

The ZEC will operate as a new non-profit corporation. Its Board will be comprised of board members for the Cincinnati Empowerment Corporation, the new governing structure responsible for the E.Z. program.

Timetable for Implementation & Outcomes

The following is the timetable for taking actions and producing outputs and outcomes to address the baseline conditions described at the beginning of this section:

Start-Up Actions:

The following key steps are required to make the ZEC operational. These steps should lead to services being delivered within three months of designation.

- Establish the Zone Empowerment Center (start-up in leased facilities at CBI's new Zone-based Oak Street Incubator or proceed with construction in the Zone-based Walnut Hills neighborhood business district).
- City appropriation of Cincinnati Empowerment Fund and creation of the lending policies.
- Conduct a detailed assessment of business needs for existing Zone manufacturers and businesses.
- Complete market research study for Neighborhood Business Districts.

Year 1-2 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Graduate thirty Zone residents from Empowerment Incubator Programs and thirty from Empowerment Microenterprise Programs in year 2.
- Provide loans to 20 businesses in the first year (to include 10 minority and female owned

business, 9 micro-enterprises and 1 cooperative or employee owned business).

- Provide loans to 30 businesses in the second year (to include 15 minority and female owned business, 13 micro-enterprises and 2 cooperative or employee owned business).

Year 3-10 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Graduate 50 Zone residents from Empower Incubator Programs and 50 from Empower Microenterprise Programs per year.
- Locate 30 Incubator graduates and new microenterprises within Zone business districts and industrial areas.
- Provide loans to 45 businesses annually to include 25 minority and female owned business, 20 micro-enterprises and 2 cooperative or employee owned business.
- Provide financing to improve 5 retail, commercial, industrial, or office properties annually.
- Provide financing to facilitate the redevelopment of 2 brownfield sites and 2 vacant commercial/industrial buildings annually.
- Provide financing to facilitate the revitalization of 5 neighborhood business districts (NBD) assisting at least 5 businesses in each NBD.
- Reduce Neighborhood Business District retail/commercial vacancy rates by 10% each year for years 3 through 7 and by 5% each year for years 8-10.
- Reduce Zone business failures by 10% based on 1998 totals.
- Increase employment by existing Zone businesses by 5% per year.

Two-Year Budget

Uses of Funds	
Zone Empowerment Center:	
Facilities development (local)	\$ 810,000
Operations and staff (local & EZ)	200,000
E-TEAM:	
Operations and staff (EZ)	\$1,000,000
In-kind support (local)	250,000
Microenterprise program services (EZ)	400,000
Business incubator program services (EZ)	160,000
Incubator capital financing support (local & EZ)	2,690,000
Cincinnati Empowerment Fund:	
E-FUND capitalization (local)	42,000,000
Brownfields CDBG commitment (local)	1,000,000
Total	\$48,510,000

Sources of Funds	
City of Cincinnati	\$4,810,000
Lenders	40,000,000
Others (includes \$250,000 in-kind)	1,000,000
EZ SSBG	2,700,000
Total	\$48,510,000

- Cooperative Fiscal Services
- Greater Cincinnati African-American Chamber of Commerce (GCAACC)
- Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce
- Hamilton County Business Incubator (Hamilton County Development Company)
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Institute for Advanced Manufacturing Sciences (IAMS)
- Jobs for People
- Ohio Department of Development
- Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Small Business Administration
- University of Cincinnati, Small Business Development Center

Partners

Lead for facilitating start up:

- City of Cincinnati Economic Development Department

Others, in alphabetical order:

- Bio-Start Incubator
- Cincinnati Business Incubator (CBI)
- Cincinnati Empowerment Zone Bank Consortium
- Cincinnati Local Development Company (CLDC)
- Cincinnati Neighborhood Business Districts United
- Community Action Agency

One Stop Capital Stop

The City of Cincinnati has worked closely with the Cincinnati office of the U.S. Small Business Administration for almost twenty years. Specifically, the City sponsors the Cincinnati Local Development Company (CLDC) which makes SBA "504" loans in the City. The CLDC is also retained as a consultant to the City to assist with small business development. In these roles, it often serves as the point of contact between the City and the SBA. Through the CLDC, then, the relationship between the City and the SBA is a close one.

Even before the Empowerment Zone application process began, the CLDC, the City, and the local SBA office began exploring new programs to assist small business development in the City. For example, the SBA asked the CLDC and the City to lead a Small Business Collaborative to ensure that non-profit organizations, providing service to small businesses, reach the maximum number of companies. This Collaborative was recently formed.

The local SBA office and the City have identified several needs of small businesses in the City. Among these is the need to ensure that small businesses in the City can easily obtain assistance. Perhaps most important is the need to make access to capital easier, especially SBA capital. A One Stop Capital Shop appeared to be the most direct answer to these needs.

When the Empowerment Zone application process began, the SBA and the City quickly realized that this was an opportunity to get a One Stop Capital Shop in the City. Knowing the success of other Shops (e.g., in Detroit), the community supported this concept and a Shop is now an integral part of the application.

The One Stop Capital Shop (OSCS) will be located in the Empowerment Zone and staffed by SBA personnel to provide entrepreneurial and financial assistance to local citizens who need assistance with a small business enterprise. In addition to traditional SBA services and loans programs, the OSCS will house a Business Information Center (BIC) to provide the latest in

high-tech hardware, software, and telecommunications services to small businesses.

The SBA is committed to participate in Round II of the Empowerment Zone initiative. The OSCS and the BIC mentioned above will be integral components of Cincinnati's effort. The full range of traditional SBA services, including its wide variety of loans programs, training, and its recently introduced government supplier program will also be available. With its location in the Zone, SBA programs to assist minority- and woman-owned businesses will be especially important.

As explained in more detail in the description of the Zone Economic Empowerment Center (ZEC), the OSCS and the BIC will be located in the ZEC facility and integrated with other ZEC programs and services. The ZEC will include numerous other organizations which provide assistance to small businesses (e.g., a SBDC, a minority SBDC, the CLDC, SCORE, etc.). The proximity of these service providers will facilitate coordination among the various organizations and ensure that the small business is provided with all the services needed.

2. Zone Access Program

There are approximately 3,000 businesses currently located in the Empowerment Zone. In order to accelerate the growth of Zone businesses, it is recommended that a new program be formed that increases the visibility, customer responsiveness, and customer awareness of the products and services they offer. The Zone Access Program (ZAP) accomplishes this goal by developing an image of Zone business that emphasizes the superior level of product and service quality, flexible responsiveness and market sensitivity. ZAP has three components.

- The first component of ZAP increases the access of Zone businesses to other Zone businesses by establishing a "Buy First" program to encourage businesses in the Zone to buy from each other. A voluntary discount will be offered to Zone businesses only. A supplier list will be created, distributed and maintained. The City of Cincinnati's Office of Contract Compliance (Equal Business Opportunity Program), Purchasing Division and the Cincinnati Minority Supplier Development Council each have partial Zone vendor lists. Posters, tee-shirts, and pins with a distinctive ZAP logo (lightning bolt) would be displayed and used by Zone businesses.
- The second component of ZAP increases the access of Zone businesses to businesses in the region by facilitating the creation of partnerships among Zone businesses. These partnerships would provide opportunities for clusters of small businesses to bid on contracts in the region. For example, a flexible manufacturing program could be designed to give smaller businesses the opportunity to compete for larger manufacturing contracts. A professional analysis of possible clusters and contract opportunities will be conducted. The analysis will be financed in part by area partners. This same group of partners will work with the major corporations in the region to establish specific bid opportunities for Zone businesses. The ZAP logo will be used in bid proposals to reinforce the quick

and direct (lightning type) response of businesses in the program. This analysis will be updated annually to allow for revised market trends and be an on-going source of information for Zone business development.

- The third component of ZAP encourages the purchase of goods and services from Zone businesses, based upon the "certified" quality of products and services. A panel of academic and business experts will be created to conduct an annual review of the quality of products and customer services provided by Zone businesses. This panel, in collaboration with area partners, will develop a criteria that will accredit Zone businesses. This quality accreditation will become part of the marketing strategy for ZAP.

EZ SSBG Goals/Options Achieved

This program helps to achieve SSBG statutory goal (1), achieving and maintaining economic self-support, and program option (4) (A), services to promote economic development and job support services.

Implementing Partner

The University of Cincinnati Center for Economic Education is the lead agency in implementing this program.

Timetable for Implementation & Outcomes

The following is the timetable for taking actions and producing outputs and outcomes to address the baseline conditions described at the beginning of this section:

Start-Up Actions:

- Establish Buy First Program by: a) creating and distributing Zone supplier list; b) establishing discount for Zone businesses; and c) creating marketing materials.
- Perform Target Industry Analysis by: a) identifying business clusters; and b) securing contract opportunities.
- Create Accreditation Program through a panel of experts and certify business.
- Track Sales and Employment Data by first establishing a baseline and then developing

procedures and mechanisms to collect and interpret data.

- Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce

Year 1-2 Outputs and Outcomes

- 50 Zone businesses will have a 5-10% increase in sales within Zone and to businesses in the region.

Year 3-10 Outputs and Outcomes

- 250 business will have a 10-40% increase in sales within Zone and to businesses in the region.
- 10% reduction in business failures with participating Zone business
- Participating Zone businesses' employment levels will increase by 10%.

Two-Year Budget

Uses of Funds	
Operations and staff (local & EZ)	\$ 250,000
Sources of Funds	
City of Cincinnati	\$ 5,000
University of Cincinnati Center for Economic Education	29,500
Local Chambers of Commerce	9,500
Cincinnati Minority Supplier Development Council	6,000
EZ SSBG	200,000
Total	\$ 250,000

Partners

Lead:

- University of Cincinnati Center for Economic Education
- **Others, in alphabetical order:**
- Cincinnati Minority Supplier Development Council
- City of Cincinnati (Department of Economic Development; Office of Contract Compliance (EBOP) Purchasing Division)
- Greater Cincinnati African American Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce

3. Wire the Zone Program

This initiative will use Cincinnati Bell Telephone's advanced telecommunications network to create productive, interactive links between Zone businesses, institutions, and residents. This will create an economic advantage within the Zone by expanding access to communication technologies for Zone residents and businesses. Every business within the Zone will be provided the opportunity to link to a **Metropolitan Area Network (MAN)** which will provide high speed voice, video, and data transmissions. Residents will be able to access this network at interactive information kiosks and computers located at public institutions throughout the Zone, as well as from personal computers at home.

The MAN will also link fourteen public schools and four branch libraries in the Zone, using **Federal E-Rate Funding** and the Ohio School Net Plus Program, where available. Cincinnati Bell Telephone is committed to act as technology consultant for each school and branch library. The program will:

- 1) Develop current technology assessments;
- 2) Write technology plans covering both current and future requirements; and
- 3) Assist the schools and libraries in the competitive application process through the Federal Schools and Libraries Corporation. Funding will be sought to provide each of these facilities with a full range of telecommunications services, including telephone service in every classroom, high-speed data circuits, Internet access, and internal wiring, routers, switches, hubs, network servers, and network operating software. Subsequent applications will be filed to seek continuing funding for annual line charges to support the services established.

The MAN will be used to provide distance learning/training at selected public facilities in the Zone. It will also be connected to the job database of the Career Resource Network. Residents will use the MAN to learn of job opportunities within the Zone, and they will submit job applications electronically. Businesses will advertise products,

take orders from customers, and allow customers to track orders via the MAN. The ability to tie into this network will be an incentive for businesses to locate in the Zone. The MAN will be accessible from outside the Zone via the Internet.

EZ SSBG Goals/Options Achieved

This program helps to achieve SSBG statutory goal (1), achieving and maintaining economic self-support, and program option (4) (A), services to promote economic development and job support services.

Implementing Partner

Cincinnati Bell Telephone will assume lead responsibility for implementing this initiative.

Timetable for Implementation & Outcomes

The following is the timetable for taking actions and producing outputs and outcomes to address the baseline conditions described at the beginning of this section:

Start-Up Actions:

- Establish web site presence for each of the 3,000 businesses in Zone on Metropolitan Area Network. Private sponsors (Internet access providers) will be sought to provide basic web site presence for each business. Enhanced web site features will be available to businesses at cost.
- Install 10 interactive kiosks at public institutions throughout the Zone.
- Establish 10 sites as distance learning/training facilities.
- Wire public schools for advanced telecommunications services.
- Wire 4 branch libraries for advanced telecommunications services.

Year 1-2 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Install 6 interactive kiosks and 6 distance learning sites
- Wire 8 schools and wire 3 branch libraries
- Increase sales revenues of at least 100 businesses in Zone by 5%.

Year 3-10 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Install 4 additional interactive kiosks and 4 additional distance learning sites
- Wire 6 additional schools and 1 additional branch library
- Increase sales revenues of at least 300 businesses in Zone by 20%.

Two-Year Budget

Uses of Funds	
Facilities and line costs (EZ and E-Rate)	\$ 859,000
Staff (Cincinnati Bell)	101,200
Total	\$ 960,200
Sources of Funds	
Cincinnati Bell Telephone	\$101,200
E-Rate	494,000
EZ SSBG	365,000
Total	\$ 960,200

Partners**Lead:**

- Cincinnati Bell Telephone

Others, in alphabetical order:

- Career Resource Network Center
- Cincinnati Public Schools
- Cincinnati State
- Cincinnati/Hamilton County Public Library
- Great Oaks Vocational School
- Greater Cincinnati African American Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce
- University of Cincinnati
- Xavier University

4 EZ Rider Connector Program

The EZ Rider Connector is a two-phased initiative that improves the access of Zone residents to alternative modes of transportation across the Cincinnati region. Phase I includes such actions as a reverse commute program and car leasing effort. Phase II includes the development of the Light Rail system, which is projected to pass directly through the Zone and connect residents to regional destinations to the north and south. The EZ Rider Connector addresses the transportation needs of the 50% of Zone households that do not have an automobile and the 28% of persons in the Zone who rely on public transportation for their trip to work.

EZ Rider Phase I

The Reverse Commute Initiative (E-Z Rider Connector Phase I) is designed to eliminate many transportation obstacles and provide transportation access to a large number of Zone workers. The recent trend for businesses in the Cincinnati Metropolitan Region has been to locate outside the 1-275 beltway where there is a gap in public transportation for many communities and work shifts. For example, a person may be able to take the bus to a certain community, but still may have to walk a mile, in an area with no sidewalks, to get to job site. Alternately, a person may be able to get to work on the bus for a second shift job, but not be able to get home. Eliminating transportation as an obstacle to employment would allow many Zone Residents to obtain and retain employment.

This initiative will offer several means for immediately improving the transportation options of Zone residents. These efforts will be newly concentrated on Zone residents, although except for the Job-Link program they are not new in the Cincinnati region. These include:

- A car leasing and repair program that provides financing for participants to obtain a vehicle as well as provide for repairs and other transportation related expenses (i.e., Car Leasing and Revolving Loans).

- An expansion of the Transportation Assistance Program, which offers individualized transportation service 24 hour/7days a week for taxi or van service to work.
- The development of the Job-Link program for the Zone, which provides a van service that links with bus stops in order to get riders to partnering companies.

The impact of this Initiative will be felt in the economic and workforce development opportunities that would be available to residents and businesses within the Zone through accessible transportation 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

These initiatives can easily be expanded to assist Empowerment Zone residents. In addition, there are entrepreneurial opportunities for new taxi and shuttle companies; employment opportunities through being able to access jobs in the outer beltway, and partnership opportunities through requiring businesses outside the Zone who utilize the shuttle service to participate financially or through contracts with Empowerment Zone businesses.

EZ SSBG Goals/Options Achieved

This program helps to achieve SSBG statutory goal (1), achieving and maintaining economic self-support, and program option (4) (A), services to promote economic development and job support services.

Implementing Partners

The primary entity responsible for this initiative the Transportation Resources and Information Project (TRIP), a private, non-profit organization dedicated to providing alternative transportation service to low-income populations.

Timetable for Implementation & Outcomes

The following is the timetable for taking actions and producing outputs and outcomes to address the baseline conditions described at the beginning of this section:

Start-Up Actions:

Since all but the Job-Link program are in existence, this initiative can get underway soon after designation. Start-up action steps include:

- Establish partnerships with key area employers.
- Develop ties with the Zone Career Resources Network Center and implement procedure for recruiting participants.
- Develop materials to publicize the transportation and employment options available to Zone residents.

Year 1-2 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Assist 20 families to obtain a car through car leasing assistance.
- Assist 60 families with car repairs, etc. through the revolving loan program.
- Provide transportation assistance for 1,000 persons.
- Increase ridership to jobs outside the Zone through Job-Link by 1,600.
- Establish one new Zone business to provide taxi/shuttle service

Year 3-10 Outputs and Outcomes:

- 100% of Zone residents will have sufficient transportation options to access jobs throughout the region.

Two-Year Budget

Uses of Funds	
Transportation Assistance program services (EZ & TRIP)	\$ 1,000,000
Car Leasing Program, program services (EZ & TRIP)	50,000
Revolving Loan Fund program services (EZ & TRIP)	120,000
Job-Link program services (EZ, TRIP & private businesses)	800,000
Total	\$ 1,970,000
Sources of Funds	
TRIP	\$ 1,050,000
Other (to be determined)	370,500
EZ SSBG	550,000
Total	\$ 1,970,000

Partners**Lead:**

- Transportation Resources and Information Project (TRIP)

Others, in alphabetical order:

- City of Cincinnati - Cincinnati Institute for Career Alternatives (CICA)
- Hamilton County Department of Human Services
- Ohio Department of Transportation
- Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments
- Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA)
- Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK)

EZ Rider Phase II

Light rail service supported by an expanded bus service constitutes Phase II of the EZ Rider Connector initiative. Phase II will serve as the future transportation infrastructure for Empowerment Zone residents, providing service to employment and other vital locations within the Zone and outside of it.

Under the leadership of the OKI Regional Council of Governments (OKI), the region is currently planning the development of the light rail transportation systems serving points between southwestern Warren County and the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport and Florence in northeast Boone County. Light rail is an electrically powered transit technology that can operate in the same right-of-way with automotive vehicles and pedestrians.

Currently, the city of Cincinnati and most of Hamilton County are served by the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority's (SORTA) bus service, Metro. Metro operates 47 base routes and up to 344 buses per weekday. It operates 911,000 service hours and 12.9 million service miles each year. Metro provides service to 23.5 million riders annually.

Phase II of the Connector system would include stations and major transfer centers. Metro's expanded bus service would transport Empowerment Zone passengers from these stations and centers to destinations not directly accessible by the light rail service or a specific bus route. The Phase II Connector service will be implemented by a transportation operating agency yet to be determined.

It is expected that the Phase II Connector stations and transfer centers (possibly up to 10 stations in the Zone) would be a public/private development between SORTA/OKI and E.Z. businesses. Using federal grant dollars, SORTA and OKI would plan and build the station and center structures with input from Zone business owners and residents. In addition to ticket sales and other transportation related functions, the stations and centers would house retail and other business

outlets owned and operated by Empowerment Zone entrepreneurs.

Implementing Partner

The implementing partner for EZ Rider Phase II will be determined as the light rail system gets underway.

Timetable for Implementation & Outcomes

The following is the timetable for taking actions and producing outputs and outcomes to address the baseline conditions described at the beginning of this section:

Start-Up Actions:

- Initiate construction and service within 5 to 10 years.
- With input from empowerment zone residents, identify suitable sites for the rail stations and centers;
- Identify and get commitments from those entrepreneurs wanting to establish businesses in the stations and centers;
- With input from empowerment zone residents, develop bus route designs that best meet the transportation needs of the area;
- Negotiate a commitment from the appropriated labor organizations and public officials to dedicate 10% or more of the light rail construction labor force to empowerment zone residents.

Year 1-5 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Complete all design and financing requirements.

Year 6-10 Outputs and Outcomes:

- All Empowerment Zone station and center businesses will be established;
- All Empowerment Zone residents will have access to public transportation, including reverse commute services to employment sites, regardless of location, time and day of the week;
- Pending approval of labor relations organizations and the appropriate government bodies, 10% or more of the workforce

constructing the light rail system will be Empowerment Zone residents.

Budget

The budget for the light rail and bus expansion reflects capital costs only. The service, design elements necessary to calculate a reasonable operating cost estimate were not available at the drafting of this initiative. The capital estimates for light rail are based on mid-1996 dollars and were taken from the *I-71 Corridor Transportation Study Phase III Alternative Evaluation Summary of Capital Cost Estimates*, Burgess & Niple, January, 1997. The estimates for bus expansion are based on Metro's 1995 to 2000 bus replacement/acquisition program.

Light Rail:

- Construction, including right-of-way acquisition, centers and stations: \$1.2 billion; \$27,800,000 per mile.
- It is expected that 50% of this cost will be borne by the federal government; the remaining 50% by local sources.

Bus Expansion:

- Given an increase of 114 buses (33%) in Metro's current peak service bus requirement: \$26,220,000; \$230,000 per bus.
- It is expected that 80% of this cost will be borne by the federal government; the remaining 20% by local sources.

NOTE: Although not calculated in this initiative, it should be noted that in all probability 100% of the operating costs for the light rail and bus expansion will have to be borne by local sources.

Partners

Lead for planning activities:

- OKI Regional Council of Governments (OKI), including their Rideshare Programs

Others, in alphabetical order:

- Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport Authority
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

- Medical complex hospitals: University, Christ, Jewish, Deaconess, Bethesda Oak and Veterans
- Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KTC)
- Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA) and the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK)
- Transportation Resources and Information Project (TRIP)
- Zone Community Councils

5. *Partnership for Workforce Competitiveness*

The Partnership is a consortium of community residents, businesses and local employment and training providers that will oversee the matching of Zone residents with employment opportunities. The employment opportunities are based on the 10,037 jobs identified by 23 regional employers that have committed to hire Zone residents who are job-ready.

The employers will use the Partnership as a “first source” of job seekers to be interviewed for available entry level and mid-level positions. The Partnership will identify qualified Zone job seekers for interviews and employers will use “best efforts” to hire the candidate. The Partnership will utilize the tools and resources of the Greater Cincinnati CareerResource Network and Center. The CareerResource Network will look to extend and concentrate its presence into the Zone.

To facilitate the Partnership’s matching residents to jobs, this initiative will establish a One-Stop Career Development Center and satellite Community CareerResource Centers within the Empowerment Zone. The Zone One-Stop Center will be electronically linked to the Greater Cincinnati CareerResource Center and Network, as well as the satellite centers. Through the Network, any Zone job seeker will have access to jobs, training or support organizations.

The City of Cincinnati’s Employment and Training Division (ETD) currently operates the Greater Cincinnati CareerResource Center. The Center provides job seekers with access to multiple employment services such as city, county and state employment and training programs and agencies; career counseling; a computer lab for Internet job search and word processing; job boards; telephone bank and various office machines. Core job search services are available at the Center and are at no cost to the customer. The Division also staffs the Greater Cincinnati CareerResource Network, which is a collaboration of 45 employment, education and training providers serving the Greater Cincinnati regional

labor market. ETD is developing a technology network that will electronically link all member agencies to the Resource Center and three primary databases. This effort will be coordinated with the previously presented Wire The Zone program.

EZ SSBG Goals/Options Achieved

This program helps to achieve SSBG statutory goal (1), achieving and maintaining economic self-support, and program option (2) (A & B), training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged adults.

Implementing Agency

The City of Cincinnati Employment and Training Division will serve as the implementing agency, coordinating service delivery through a network of employment and training providers.

Timetable for Implementation & Outcomes

The following is the timetable for taking actions and producing outputs and outcomes to address the baseline conditions described at the beginning of this section:

Start-Up Actions:

A number of steps will help insure this effort reaches all Zone residents. Although some of these actions will occur over the next 2-3 years, the consortium and matching activities can start upon EZ designation.

- Establish the consortium of community residents, businesses and local employment and training providers.
- Establish the Zone One-Stop Career Development Center in the Zone
- Establish electronic linkages between the Zone Center, the CareerResource Center and Internet Job seekers
- Establish satellite centers and electronic linkages with the Zone Center

Year 1-2 Outputs and Outcomes:

- 1500 persons will receive service including placements, training referrals and support referrals by the end of the 2 year period

Year 3-10 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Establish 3 satellite Community/CareerResource Centers
- Link, electronically, major Zone facilities to the Network
- Increase the Zone Median Household Income by 30%
- Reduce the number of persons living at or below poverty by 40%

Two-Year Budget

Uses of Funds	
Operations and staff (City & EZ)	\$ 1,600,000
Facilities and electronic links (EZ)	475,000
Total	\$2,075,000

Sources of Funds	
City of Cincinnati	\$1,200,000
EZ SSBG	650,000
Total	\$2,075,000

Partners

Lead:

- City of Cincinnati Employment and Training Division

Others, in alphabetical order:

- Cincinnati Institute for Career Alternatives
- Cincinnati State Technical and Community College
- Cincinnati/Hamilton County Private Industry Council
- City of Cincinnati Economic Development Department
- City Public Schools—Queen City Vocational Center
- Greater Cincinnati CareerResource NetWork
- Hamilton County Dept. of Human Services
- Ohio Bureau of Employment Services
- Transportation Resource Information Project
- Zone Community Councils

6. Sector-Based Training Initiative

This initiative will provide a graduated, fully supported approach to enable Empowerment Zone residents to achieve initial employment and facilitate access to higher levels of employment and economic opportunity through ongoing employment support, flexibly scheduled training and employer cooperation. The Cincinnati State Technical and Community College will build upon their nationally recognized program to provide Zone participants the short-term and career advancement sector-based technical skills training.

The training will be offered in five career sectors: 1) health care, 2) office and PC support, 3) customer service, 4) trucking, and 5) engineering technologies. Once placed in employment, participants will have the opportunity to continue skills training in a defined pathway. This will allow participants to make career advances that take them to sustainable earnings levels within 12 to 18 months, depending on the field and the ability and motivation of the participant.

The program will be structured to recruit a minimum of 350 program participants. This will be a joint effort of Cincinnati State, neighborhood-based organizations, and industry partners. Participants will be provided with an assessment of their skills, interests and education levels to maximize placement in the most appropriate technical training component. In addition, participants will receive job readiness/pre-employment training from culturally sensitive, neighborhood-based organizations.

Cincinnati State will offer training in five sector-based industries with a minimum of 70% of participants successfully completing the training. Utilizing its network of 650 employers across the region, Cincinnati State will place 80% (200) of completed participants in paid employment within two weeks of completing training, with the balance placed within four weeks. Jobs will be with sector-based employers committed to hiring program graduates.

Employed participants will receive employment counseling services and support from

neighborhood-based organizations to maximize employment retention for a minimum of six months. Expected retention is a minimum of 70% of completed participants. Through continued support and intervention, at least one-half of completed participants will successfully engage in one additional level of sector-based training within nine months of their original start date. Of this number, another fifty percent will complete a third level of skills training within twelve months of their start date.

EZ SSBG Goals/Options Achieved

This program helps to achieve SSBG statutory goal (1), achieving and maintaining economic self-support, and program option (2) (B), non-profit organizations providing training.

Implementation Partner

Cincinnati State Technical and Community College will assume responsibility for this initiative. The College will use its existing nationally recognized skills training programs to serve Zone participants.

Timetable for Implementation & Outcomes

The following is the timetable for taking actions and producing outputs and outcomes to address the baseline conditions described at the beginning of this section:

Start-Up Actions:

Zone participants will be able to access this training within months of designation. Key steps to get the initiative started include:

- Finalize plans for community-based providers to provide pre-employment training and post employment retention services.
- Finalize recruitment procedures and criteria for Zone residents.
- Amend existing service provider contract so as to provide assessments of Zone participants

Year 1-2 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Provide training for a minimum of 350 Zone residents
- Place 80% of participants in full-time paid employment within two weeks of completing training.
- 70% of completed participants will remain employed for a minimum of 6 months

Year 3-10 Outputs and Outcomes

- Increase number of participants to 500 per year.
- Establish partnerships with 5-10 new sector-based employers per year.
- Increase completion rate from 70% to 80%
- Expand available sector based training from 5 to 15 areas.

Two-Year Budget

Uses of Funds	
Program costs (400 participants)	\$ 1,400,000
Sources of Funds	
Hamilton County Department of Human Services	\$ 600,000
Employers	160,000
Cincinnati State	30,000
EZ SSBG	610,000
Total	\$ 1,400,000

Partners

Lead:

- Cincinnati State Community College

Others, in alphabetical order:

- Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce
- City of Cincinnati Employment Training Div.
- Hamilton County Dept. of Human Services
- Institute of Advanced Manufacturing Sciences
- Urban Appalachian Council
- Urban League of Greater Cincinnati
- Zone Community Councils

7. Brownfields Redevelopment

In ten years Cincinnati wants to ensure that underused, abandoned and/or idle commercial and industrial properties in the Zone are being cleaned up and redeveloped. This will be achieved by using a Zone-focused brownfield program to enhance and fill the gaps of existing state and federal incentives, which are designed to encourage the remediation and redevelopment of abandoned, idle or underused commercial and industrial properties.

The activities that will facilitate brownfield redevelopment include:

- Marketing existing local, state and federal brownfield redevelopment tools, financial assistance and tax incentive programs;
- Providing technical assistance in accessing financial assistance and tax incentive programs;
- Developing and implementing brownfield redevelopment revolving loan and bond finance programs to provide gap financing; and
- Creating revenue streams to cover the operating costs of the brownfield redevelopment initiative and begin building reserve funds for grant subsidies, parcel assembly and additional loan/bond security for more difficult brownfield redevelopment projects.

Brownfield redevelopment will help to recycle land in the Zone by cleaning up contamination and redeveloping old commercial and industrial properties. Recycling the land provides new space for existing businesses to expand and for new ones to develop in the Zone. It will also help improve the quality of life and the environment for residents, by addressing environmental contamination and blighting influences in the Zone.

The City of Cincinnati received a \$200,000 US EPA Brownfield Pilot Grant (grant ends October 1, 1999) to begin developing strategies and programs to this end. The first outcome of the

grant efforts to date has been the creation of the Port Authority for Brownfields Redevelopment in Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Port Authority). The Port Authority was created to facilitate this process. The Port Authority is a multi-jurisdictional, cooperative agency that serves all of Hamilton County and its political subdivisions.

The State of Ohio has created several low-interest loan, grant, technical assistance and tax incentives to encourage Brownfield redevelopment. The Port Authority will market these programs and provide technical assistance to redevelopers undertaking Brownfield redevelopment in the Zone in accessing the tools most appropriate for the projects. By working with the Property Clearinghouse initiative, the Port Authority will identify old commercial and industrial sites that could benefit from brownfield redevelopment incentive programs.

The Port Authority has begun laying the foundation for developing a revolving loan and/or bond finance program. A local Brownfield redevelopment revolving loan fund will help subsidize the environmental testing, clean up and redevelopment of brownfield sites. This type of gap financing is needed, since private lenders will not typically lend money for environmental testing and clean up and many projects do not qualify for existing State financial assistance programs. Furthermore, private lenders often will not lend funds for redevelopment unless environmental issues have already been addressed.

Additionally, the Port Authority will serve as the conduit agency for issuing the \$130 million in tax exempt, non-volume-cap bonds provided by the Empowerment Zone designation. The Port Authority will be the reviewing agency for the brownfield bond issues, while the Cincinnati Local Development Company (CLDC) will be the reviewing agency for the urban redevelopment projects. The Port Authority would serve as the conduit agency for all of the bond issues, as is provided in Ohio statute. The Port Authority's staff, bond counsel and other professional contractors will provide the necessary services to issue the bonds.

In *addition* to marketing and technical assistance provided by the Port Authority, a dual brownfield revolving loan fund and bond finance strategy will help to perpetuate the initial investment made by the U.S. EPA Brownfield Pilot Grant to support the brownfield redevelopment initiative in Greater Cincinnati. It will also create benefits well beyond the 10-year Empowerment Zone designation. A long-term commitment to capitalize and recycle key Zone assets through facilitating Brownfield redevelopment in the community will ensure that urban businesses have room to grow and a positive physical environment in which to thrive. It will also provide opportunities for new businesses to be attracted to the Zone. All of these actions will improve the employment opportunities, quality of life and environment for Zone residents and the surrounding community.

EZ SSBG Goals/Options Achieved

This program helps to achieve SSBG statutory goal (1), achieving and maintaining economic self-support, and program option (4) (A), services to promote economic development and job support services.

Implementing Partner

The implementing partner for Brownfields Development will be the Port Authority for Brownfields Redevelopment in Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

Timetable for Implementation & Outcomes

The following is the timetable for taking actions and producing outputs and outcomes to address the baseline conditions described at the beginning of this section:

Start-Up Actions:

- Refine and improve technical assistance, marketing and outreach initiatives.
- Identify underused, abandoned and idle commercial and industrial properties that may benefit from brownfield incentive programs.
- Define a framework and secure funding sources for a brownfield revolving loan program

- Develop and implement EZ bond finance program strategy, including aggressive marketing.

Year 1-2 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Identify and issue bonds for at least one brownfield redevelopment project.
- Issue 10-20% of the \$130 million in EZ bonding capacity.

Year 3-10 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Facilitate the clean up and redevelopment of 7-10 properties.
- Issue all of the \$130 million in EZ bonding capacity.
- Job creation and/or retention of jobs for 100-500 Zone residents through the brownfield revolving loan and bond finance programs.

- Hamilton County Development Company
- Ohio Department of Development
- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
- US Environmental Protection Agency

Two-Year Budget

Uses of Funds	
Operations and staff (local & EZ)	\$ 130,000
Financing (EZ bonds)	10,000,000
Total	\$ 10,130,000

Sources of Funds	
Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce	30,000
EZ SSBG	100,000
EZ Authorized Bonds	10,000,000
Total	\$ 10,130,000

Partners

Lead:

- Port Authority for Brownfields Redevelopment in Cincinnati and Hamilton County

Others, in alphabetical order:

- City of Cincinnati Building and Improvement
- City of Cincinnati Economic Development Department
- City of Cincinnati Office of Environmental Management
- Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce

8 Community Bridges

The Community Bridges Coalition will be created to strengthen relationships among Zone institutional employers and Zone organizations and residents to advance their mutual interests. This will be done by improving communication and providing opportunities to work together to market Zone assets. The initiative will have three components:

- 1) Developing marketing strategies and campaigns to promote the Zone and its programs;
- 2) Providing mechanisms for regular communication among Zone institutions and community groups and residents; and
- 3) Providing forums for dispute resolution and mediation.

The Uptown Collaborative, an existing organization that represents a portion of the Zone, will be the initial implementing organization. The Collaborative will serve as the Community Bridges model, however, the goal is to “seed” several similar groups throughout the Zone to meet the unique needs of each neighborhood. The program will rely heavily on existing community development corporations to implement activities, research initiatives and administer programs.

- **Marketing the Zone**—Community Bridges will promote the assets and benefits of the Zone to targeted external and internal clients. The Uptown Collaborative will hire a full-time staff member to design and develop a multimedia Zone marketing campaign to promote its assets and benefits. Everything from housing and business development opportunities to arts and cultural resources will be highlighted. The marketing material will emphasize unique aspects of the Zone, including low-cost land and buildings. Developing materials and an outreach plan to market Zone tax incentives, as described in the Tax Utilization Plan, will also be an integral part of the Zone marketing program.

The marketing effort will be a joint campaign, with staff drawing upon existing programs used by community development corporations, neighborhood business associations and other organizations. In addition, the Community Bridges groups will make use of the equipment and staff assistance of the Community Media and Marketing Center to prepare their marketing campaigns.

The campaign will compliment the marketing efforts of community and regional Chambers of Commerce. Zone businesses will have direct access to the marketing information through Zone business breakfast meetings to be hosted by the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce and the Cincinnati City Manager.

- **Communication Mechanisms**—Community Bridges will meet monthly, providing a regular opportunity for Zone institutions and residents to collaboratively discuss and develop solutions to neighborhood issues and concerns, plan community activities, develop joint marketing materials and promote Empowerment Zone strategies.

The Coalition will also publish a monthly newsletter, which will detail activities of key employers in the Zone. The newsletter will post job openings, list community programs and communicate information on neighborhood happenings. The Coalition’s newsletters and forums, in conjunction with the Partnership for Workforce Competitiveness Initiative, will enable employers to communicate their labor force needs to residents, and neighborhoods will be able to coordinate recruitment and job training programs to fill these needs.

- **Dispute Resolution Forum**—One of the primary benefits of the Coalition will be to provide an immediate forum for mediating and resolving disputes that may arise between Zone residents and their institutional neighbors. Creating a conduit for the exchange of information will strengthen the

relationship between these groups and reduce the possibility for conflict.

EZ SSBG Goals/Options Achieved

This program helps to achieve SSBG statutory goal (1), achieving and maintaining economic self-support.

Implementing Partner

The Uptown Collaborative will be the implementing partner for Community Bridges. The Collaborative has operated for the past six years and brings significant experience to this initiative.

Timetable for Implementation & Outcomes

The following is the timetable for taking actions and producing outputs and outcomes to address the baseline conditions described at the beginning of this section:

Start-Up Actions:

In order to assure that the program is up and running within six months, the following action steps will be taken:

- Create the Community Bridge Coalition from various Zone groups.
- Publish a monthly newsletter.
- Develop an inventory of Zone assets and benefits.
- Design and implement a marketing program to promote the Zone.
- Distribute marketing information through all avenues.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of marketing program annually.

Year 1-2 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Increase the number of residents employed by key Zone institutions by 2%.
- Grow overall employment of Zone institutions by 1%.

Year 3-10 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Increase the number of residents employed by key Zone institutions by 10%.

- Grow overall employment of Zone institutions by 5%.

Two-Year Budget

Uses of Funds	
Operations and staff (local & EZ)	\$ 300,000
Sources of Funds	
Uptown Collaborative	\$ 60,000
EZ SSBG	240,000
Total	\$ 300,000

Partners

Lead:

- Uptown Collaborative

Others, in alphabetical order:

- African American Chamber of Commerce
- Children's Hospital Medical Center
- Cincinnati Economic Development Department
- Cincinnati Zoo
- Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce
- Hamilton County Development Company
- University of Cincinnati
- Xavier University
- Zone hospitals

9. *Preparing and Employing the Hard-to-Serve*

This initiative is a coordinated effort among employers; community based social service and vocational rehab agencies; and technical schools to help Zone residents facing the severest obstacles to obtaining and keeping jobs and increasing their earning ability. Building on the success of an ongoing City-County partnership on behalf of TANF participants, the effort will expand to serve the working poor and others ineligible for TANF cash assistance. These include unemployed African American and Appalachian men, ex-offenders, families leaving the welfare rolls, and others who may have low basic skill levels, serious family problems, little work history, substance abuse issues, or other barriers to employment.

The initiative emphasizes strong outreach to struggling families and individuals to engage them in services. It will offer access to a flexible array of state-of-the-art, culturally competent pre- and post-employment skill development and support services, including:

- Case management for those requiring intensive support in their transition to work.
- Simplified service access through integrated workforce development services and effective linkages to social and therapeutic services.
- Innovative collaborations with employers that include customized training to help a participant enter or advance in a particular industry or occupation.
- Transitional supported work opportunities leading to unsubsidized employment.
- Job retention services to help stabilize new workers and maintain their attachment to the workforce, including re-employment services.
- Vocational assessment, job development, and links to resources for career advancement.
- Modular part time skills development programs (including academic and employability skills) to increase earnings potential.
- Transportation assistance, in conjunction with the EZ Rider Connector Program, to fill the gaps in public transportation, including van and car pools, car leasing, etc.
- Welfare diversion/short term intervention to help families overcome immediate problems that are putting them at risk of needing public assistance.

EZ SSBG Goals/Options Achieved

This program helps to achieve SSBG statutory goal (1), achieving and maintaining economic self-support, and program options (2) (A & B), training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged adults, and (4) (A), services to promote economic development and job support services.

Implementing Partners

An existing City-County partnership will direct and manage this initiative. It will also rely on existing service providers to perform the essential functions of this effort.

Timetable for Implementation & Outcomes

The following is the timetable for taking actions and producing outputs and outcomes to address the baseline conditions described at the beginning of this section:

Start-Up Actions:

Because this initiative expands existing efforts to the Zone and population groups not previously covered by the program, start-up time will be minimal. The following are the implementation action steps that will be taken:

- Modify service strategy and broaden collaborators as necessary for the non-TANF target population.
- Use bidding procedures and other development approaches to put expanded services in place, building on existing provider/employer network and adjusting the mix of services and employment to respond to emerging needs.
- Enlarge City-County team providing technical support to providers and promoting ongoing

program evaluation and adoption of best practices.

- Establish electronic links among providers, Hamilton County Department of Human Services, and One-Stop Career Center(s).

Year 1-2 Outputs and Outcomes:

- 900 Zone residents will be engaged in workforce development services by end of second year.
- 900 Zone residents will be in unsubsidized employment by the end of the second year, with 75% continuing to receive post-employment services.

Year 3-10 Outputs and Outcomes:

- Services will reach 3000 families or individuals annually.
- The percentage of Zone residents returning to public assistance will decrease by 50%.
- 75% of participants will be employed steadily.
- Average earnings of participants will increase by 25%.

Two-Year Budget

Uses of Funds	
Program Services (local & EZ)	\$5,400,000
Sources of Funds	
Hamilton County Department of Human Services	\$4,500,000
EZ SSBG	900,000
Total	\$5,400,000

Partners

Lead:

- City of Cincinnati Employment and Training Division
- Hamilton County Department of Human Services

Others, in alphabetical order:

- Community agencies and family resource centers, ranging from Seven Hills Neighborhood Houses, Jireh, and Children's Protective Service to the YWCA, Urban

League, Community Action Agency, Legal Aid Society, and the Free Store

- Employers such as Star Bank, hotels, hospitals, and restaurants
- Technical Schools such as Queen City Vocational School and Cincinnati State
- Treatment agencies: Crossroads and Talbert House
- Vocational rehabilitation agencies such as WRC and CRI